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*Development Opportunities and Environmental Resources  
in Shellpile and Bivalve Along the Lower Maurice River  
in Commercial Township, N.J.*

A LOCAL COASTAL GRANT UNDER NJSA 13:1D-9(a)  
GRANT # GL 68042

"This report was prepared under contract with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Coastal Resources, Planning Group with the financial assistance of the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, under the provisions of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act, P.L. 92-583, as amended."

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE NOAA  
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September 14, 1990

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose of Study	2
1.2 Land Use Limitations	3
2. Description of the Study Area	4
2.1 Background	7
2.2 Location	8
2.3 Zoning Regulations	8
2.4 Visual Assessment	10
3. Development Opportunities and Needs	12
3.1 Diversification	13
3.2 Providing a Favorable Business Climate	15
4. Environmental Consideration: Special Areas	16
4.1 Water-Related	17
4.2 Water's Edge-Related	18
4.3 Coast Protection-Related	19
4.4 Wildlife-Related	23
4.5 Other Special Areas	24
5. Next Steps	25

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment of Development Opportunities and Environmental Resources in Shellpile and Bivalve Along the Lower Maurice River Waterfront is a study of contrasts. The study area is an active and developed commercial strip in a basically rural setting. Expanses of environmentally sensitive wetlands surround potentially ideal sites for development. The gritty nature of the shellfishing industry itself is an attraction for tourism. The single most important resource--oysters--which had previously accounted for much of the area's commercial growth has diminished and now remains, at best, an uncertain resource.

It is obvious to all concerned that the key to revitalizing Commercial Township's economic base is to build upon and yet conserve its greatest asset: The Maurice River. Community leaders and local officials recognize that while some development is not only desirable but necessary, only development that is limited in scale and environmentally compatible would be feasible.

Within that scope of limited water-oriented development there are tremendous opportunities. Some twenty individuals own property along the just under two mile stretch of commercial-industrial waterfront. Several of them are prepared to expand their businesses or improve their properties.

Potential newcomers related to the fishing and boating industry have been considering the area for possible relocation.

Commercial fleets from other parts of the Jersey shore could be attracted to the area. The Township is now prepared to promote its assets and overcome its obstacles in order to generate development.

### 1.1 Purpose of the Study

This study was prepared at the request of Mayor George Garrison of Commercial Township and made possible through a Local Coastal Grant from the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection (D.E.P.), Division of Coastal Resources with financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Its purpose is to assess the development potential of the Shellpile-Bivalve Riverfront (see description of study area) in view of the environmental resources of the Delaware Bay Shore.

The report is accompanied by a Land Use Map identifying categories of existing land uses along the Maurice River waterfront. The first two sections of the report provide background for the study and define the study area. Section Three is an assessment of development opportunities and needs. Section Four describes environmental constraints to be addressed for potential development. One of the most important components is Section Five, which highlights further areas of study. These action-oriented next steps can help pave the way for the urgently needed revitalization of Shellpile-Bivalve.

## 1.2 Land Use Limitations

According to current planning and development documents, the Shellpile-Bivalve area is considered a limited growth region. The N.J. Department of Environmental Protection has identified fourteen coastal regions in the State, of which Cumberland County lies in the "Delaware Bayshore Region." Only the cities of Millville and Bridgeton are classified as development areas. Due to the predominance of environmentally sensitive lands, the rest of the County is considered a "limited growth region" suitable for in-fill development. According to the N.J. State Development and Redevelopment Plan, the study area lies in Tier 7 "Environmentally Sensitive Areas" where development densities must be carefully managed.

On a more local scale, the Township's Future Land Use Plan, Updated 1989, acknowledges the environmental constraints as well as the existing built-up character of the waterfront. It emphasizes the need to revitalize the entire Port Norris area, including Shellpile and Bivalve, through the promotion of such environmentally compatible industries as tourism and recreation.

Recognizing both environmental limitations as well as the dire need for development and upgrading of the Lower Maurice River waterfront, the findings of this study are consistent with the prevailing planning literature. Limited development of new and expanded coastal-related commercial, industrial, recreational and cultural activity should be encouraged at or adjacent to

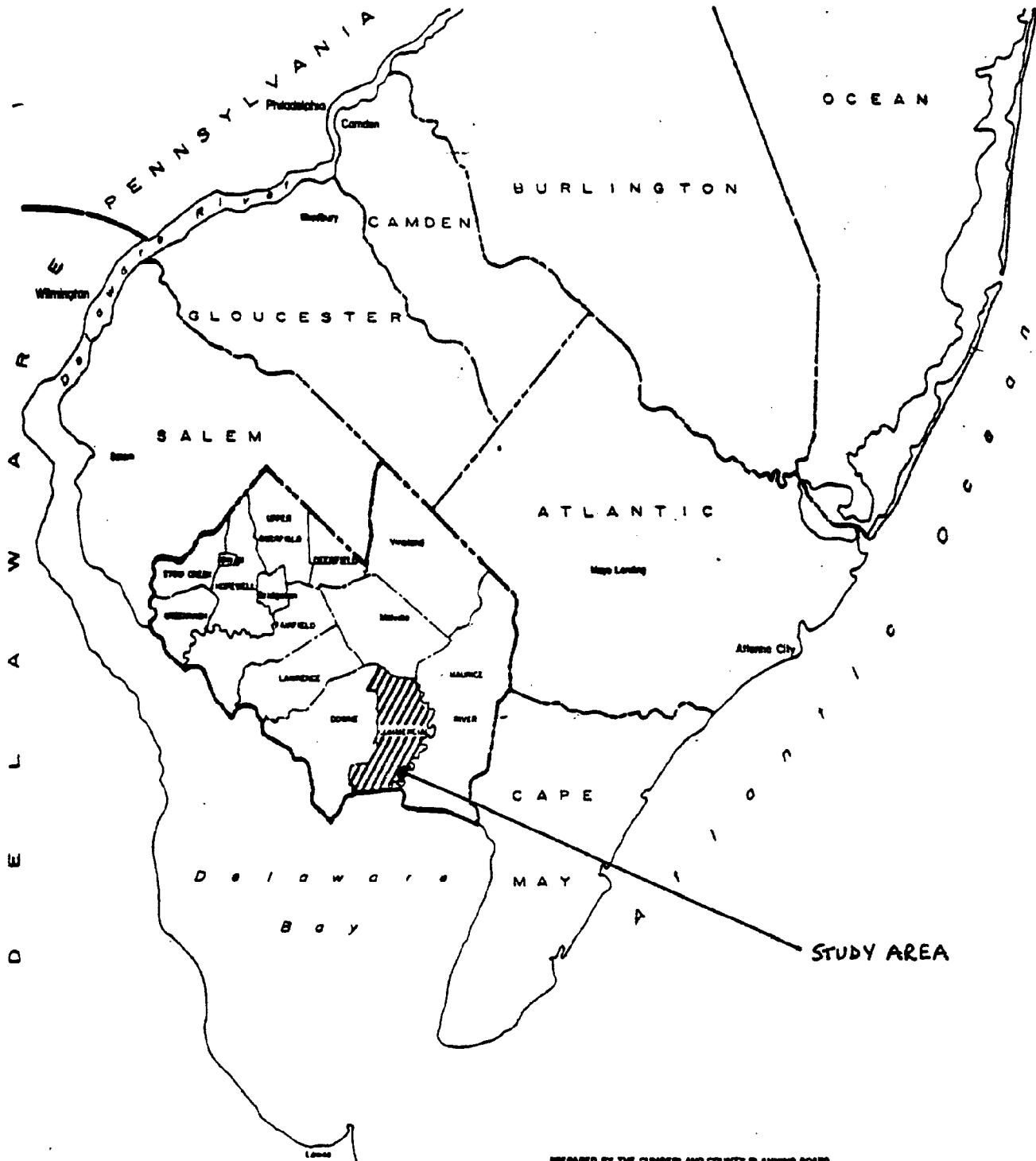
environmentally suitable sites. There is sufficient opportunity for in-fill development and re-use of existing structures to make a marked difference in Shellpile and Bivalve.

More intensive commercial and industrial use of the waterfront through expanded shellfish, fishing, processing and packing activity needs to precede all other efforts in order to boost the economic base of jobs and rateables. This needs to be accompanied by a major clean-up and rehabilitation campaign to create a visual impact. Only then can tourism be promoted as a tool to generate and reinforce other economic activity.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA**

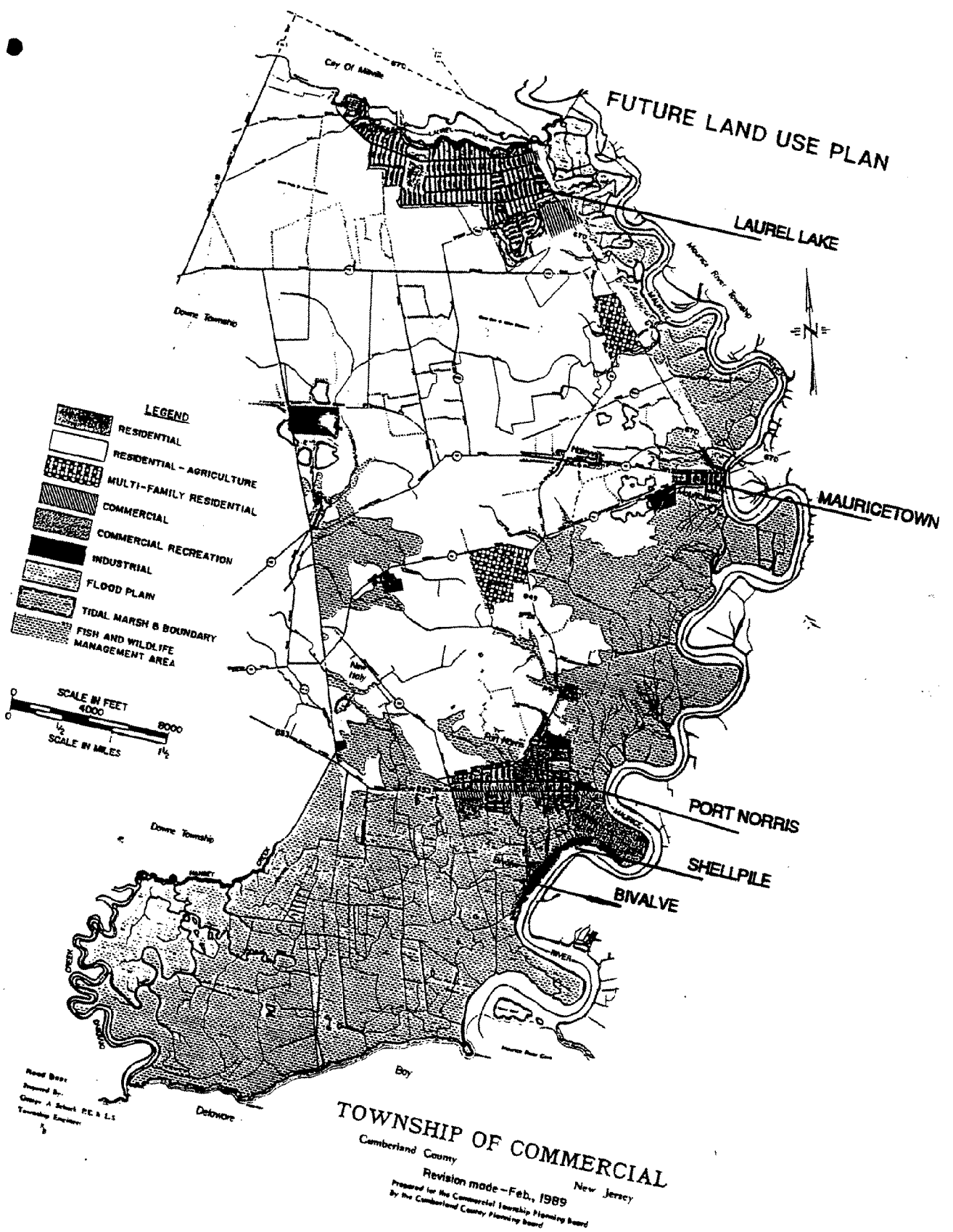
The Shellpile-Bivalve area is one of three nodes of development in Commercial Township: Laurel Lake in the northern part of the Township; Haleyville-Mauricetown in the central part; Port Norris and Shellpile-Bivalve to the south. See Maps, pages 5 and 6. The Port Norris Township Center and the commercial-recreational-industrial riverfront of Shellpile and Bivalve together represent one of the most economically distressed communities in the State.

# LOCATION MAP FOR COMMERCIAL TOWNSHIP



PREPARED BY THE CLIMBERLAND COUNTY PLANNING BOARD





## 2.1 Background

The population of Commercial Township was approximately 4,700 people in 1980, of which more than one-third lived in Port Norris. The most recent estimate indicated a small population increase to about 5,000 by the late 1980s. Despite the steady economic decline, most people have remained in the area relying on whatever work is available and on welfare subsidies. The Township's rate of unemployment in 1987 was 14.3%, substantially above the State average of 3.8% and the Cumberland County average of 7.6% during the same period.

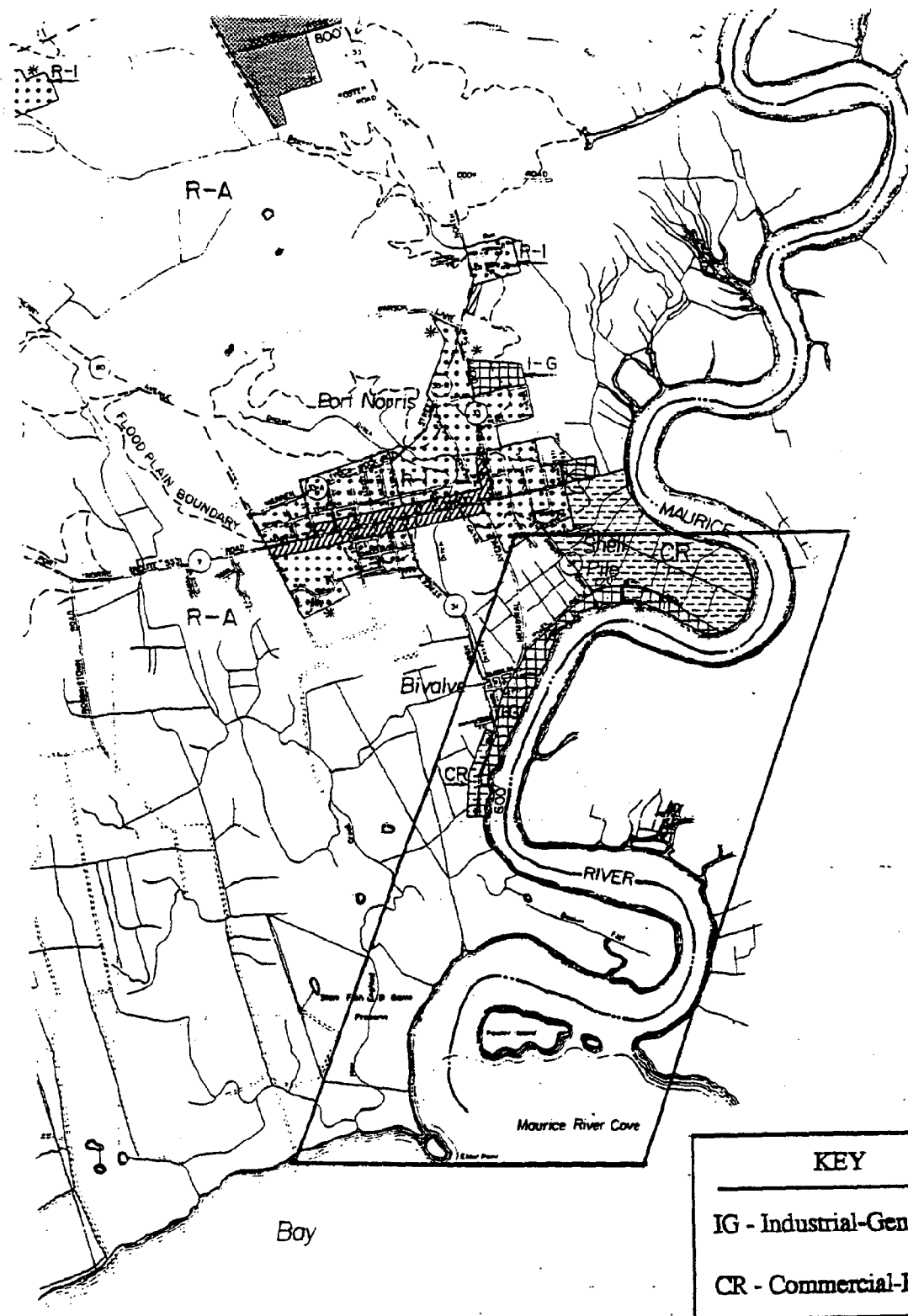
While these numbers are indicative of the grim economic situation, they do not reflect the situation completely accurately. Even for most of those who can find employment related to the shellfishing industry, their jobs are seasonal and low-skilled. Still the availability of "cheap labor" is one of the forces that makes this area attractive for new seafood processing and packing firms. Diversifying the employment base by adding service industry jobs related to tourism and recreation would be beneficial.

## 2.2 Location

The study area encompasses the commercial waterfront along the west bank of the Maurice River approximately from the "Peak of the Moon" in Shellpile to the mouth of the river in the Delaware Bay (See Map, page 9). This area covers the water's edge south of Route 553 -- Main Street in Port Norris. The entire length of this river stretch is some five miles as it meanders along curves and bends. However, a large portion at both ends of the study area is not easily accessible or suitable for development given the predominance of wetlands. The major portion of developable land south of Port Norris is confined to the narrow strip of just under two miles in length along Berry Avenue, Miller Avenue, and Shell Road.

## 2.3 Zoning Regulations

According to the Township Zoning Ordinance, the Shellpile-Bivalve "business district" is zoned commercial-recreation at the northern and southern ends and industrial-general in the center. Among the uses permitted under the commercial-recreation category are marinas and marine services, seafood dealers, and boat storage and repair, public or private facilities for fishing, hunting, camping, trailers, clubs, as well as motels and restaurants. Among the permitted uses in the industrial general district are research, processing, storage and warehousing, manufacturing production of "so-called" heavy industries under certain conditions, as well as accessory uses and buildings including single family dwellings that are incidental to the primary use of the lot.



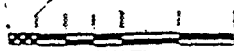
# TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCIAL

Cumberland County

New Jersey

PREPARED FOR THE COMMERCIAL TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD  
BY THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

REVIEWED BY                      TOWNSHIP ENGINEER



FEB, 1979

ZONING MAP

## 2.4 Visual Assessment

In fact, all of the above uses are found along the business district, in what can at best be described as a random pattern. Given the development and redevelopment needs of the area, it is not unreasonable that all of the above uses exist randomly side by side. Approximately 120 properties in the study area were examined through windshield survey and interviews with local proprietors. A large-scale Land Use Map of existing uses was prepared to accompany this report but is not included in the narrative portion of the report.

Among the uses identified directly along the River's edge were: four marinas (including one currently inactive and proposed for redevelopment); at least five sites with boat/machine repair, trailers and storage facilities; about a dozen commercial fishing operations, many of which operate off piers and loading docks; eight underutilized properties, some of which housed unidentifiable, dilapidated buildings; several residential dwellings and one cottage containing two seasonal vacation rental units; a soft-shell crab "farm;" two clam/oyster shucking and packing operations, (one of which brings clams in from Connecticut, the other a brand new facility from Cape May), and several remaining oyster packing houses. Additional waterfront uses include a restaurant, a public fishing pier, the Rutgers Shellfish Research Lab, as well as existing and proposed Marine Police barracks. A number of key structures are referenced on the Land Use Map of the Shellpile-Bivalve waterfront.

Overall, a visual assessment of the Shellpile-Bivalve "business district" paints the picture of a gritty old waterfront. On one hand, there are pockets of bustling fishing activity, scattered decaying buildings, underutilized areas littered with trailers, machine parts, fuel tanks and crab pots. But the picture is paradoxical. That same tired-looking waterfront also reflects a tranquil rural setting of open vistas, tall grasses lining the road, handsome recreational boats docked at marinas and small commercial vessels on the river.

Some of the existing land use designations are deceiving: large amounts of open space on commercial properties that appear vacant or underutilized are actually used as parking for marinas on weekends, for storing crab pots and other gear owned by smaller fishermen, or for stockpiling shells which will eventually be used as fill. Other sites that appear vacant with overgrown vegetation are productive agricultural areas used for the farming of salt hay. Much of the waterfront regardless of use or location, is in need of upgrading ranging from simple paint-up/fix-up to complete demolition of existing buildings. Rebuilding fishing piers and docks, maintenance of the eroding water's edge, and improving the flood-prone road network are essential.

In the sum, the area offers a wealth of opportunities to promote its commercial and recreational resources, but there are many obstacles to overcome.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND NEEDS

During the early eighties, the shellfish industry in New Jersey carried a dockside landing value of \$8 million with a retail value in excess of \$21 million, employing some 1,500 fishermen in distribution, processing and retail. Traditionally, Commercial Township with its thriving oyster production has been at the forefront of this industry. During the heyday prior to the 1960s, about 300 oyster boats could be found in the Delaware Bay. Today, only 101 oyster boat limited-entry licenses remain outstanding statewide, regulated by DEP, of which not all are active. This past Spring, 31 boats went out for "bay season."

As with any natural resource, unpredictable disturbances can alter their cycle or habitat and destroy the entire resource. This was the case with oysters in 1957 when the "MSX" blight struck the oyster beds of the Delaware Bay. With the decline of the oyster industry came the decline of Commercial Township. For a local economic base to depend so heavily on one natural resource is inherently risky. The watermen of Shellpile and Bivalve are still confronting the aftermath of the resulting economic decline, as evidenced by the high degree of unemployment, dwindled tax base and abundance of underutilized waterfront properties. Despite the grim statistics, many have stayed on to retrofit their operations and introduce new "product" lines. Basically, they have been forced to diversify.

Diversification of the economic base -- not depending on a single "crop" -- is one of the major strategies in revitalizing the waterfront communities along the Lower Maurice River. Providing a favorable climate for business expansion is the other necessary variable. Together, implementing these two strategies could help revitalize not only Shellpile and Bivalve, but the Township as a whole.

### 3.1 Diversification

Product. This refers both to creating a larger market for other types of fish available locally and to developing the ability to spawn fish not indigenous to the area, through hatcheries and aquaculture. Fishing for weakfish, flounder, eel, among others, as well as fish used for bait, could be promoted commercially, and striped bass recreationally. Hatcheries for spawning weakfish and striped bass should be investigated.

Industry. Promoting tourism as an industry along the Shellpile-Bivalve Riverfront should be considered. The prospects for and location of a local watermen museum is currently being explored. Such a museum would create a sense of place and a unique tourist attraction in an area boasting a rich and distinctive cultural heritage. Coupled with house tours of nearby Victorian architecture and tours of various shellfish operations, a museum on the waterfront would enhance Cumberland County's existing variety of tourist attractions. The promotion of tourism, especially the idea of a "living/working" museum



should be predicated on certain variables falling into place, e.g., the paint-up/fix-up of waterfront properties from one end to the other, possibly using a crab operation on one end and a clam processing plant on the other as anchors.

Market Segment. Traditionally, the local shellfish industry has catered to the wholesale trade with some retail business. Complementing the establishment of recreation and tourism activities which would attract more people to the area, a small retail market could be developed here as a mini-version of New York City's Fulton Fish Market. Such a fresh seafood retail-wholesale operation would serve as an economic multiplier by generating additional tourism and providing a direct market outlet for the local fishermen. Both individuals and restaurateurs from the surrounding region could take advantage of the fresh catch.

Recreational Facilities. The National Marine Manufacturing Association reports that boat sales (fresh and ocean going classes) have increased some 20 to 30 percent annually for each of the past five years. Existing and prospective marinas should take advantage of this trend and increase the number of available boat slips in the area. Nearby amenities should be provided in terms of bait and tackle shops, refreshment stands, boat repair and maintenance facilities. The pricing of slips should accommodate a variety of ranges and

should be comparable to prices charged by marinas in surrounding areas. The acquisition or development of additional public recreation areas should be considered to enhance the variety of places for fishing, hunting, birdwatching, etc. in conjunction with enhancing the tourism industry.

### 3.2 Providing a Favorable Climate for Business Expansion

Community leaders, local proprietors and county officials have all acknowledged the need for infrastructure improvements as incentives to attract new shellfish-related industries or expand existing businesses. Probably the most vital need is for a local water treatment facility. This is urgent not only to deal with the area-wide problems of septic systems, but because the shellfish industry requires large quantities of water to dispose of the waste products resulting from cleaning, shucking and processing seafood. At least two existing firms have expressed the desire to expand their clam shucking operations, if not hindered by their DEP mandated capacity to dispose limited quantities of waste bi-products. A joint venture among existing and potential users together with State and Federal funding sources should be explored to finance a water treatment plan for the commercial-industrial waterfront.

A distressed community like Shellpile-Bivalve is eligible for a variety of public sector economic development assistance to help rehabilitate its physical plant, including road and drainage improvements and paint-up/fix-up of individual buildings. In addition, low interest loans and tax advantages should be

investigated for businesses relocating to or expanding in the area. It has been suggested that the area be considered for a special designation as an Environmental Enterprise Zone to qualify for business incentives similar to those available in distressed "urban" enterprise zones. Among the benefits of such designation -- either legislated or as unofficial policy -- would be the ability to streamline the process of obtaining permits or funding assistance.

#### 4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS: SPECIAL AREAS

In compliance with the N.J. DEP's coastal policies (Rules on Coastal Resources and Development, 1986), this section addresses environmental concerns related to the potential commercial and recreational reuse activities discussed in this report. Thirteen "special areas" requiring coastal conservation and management as identified by DEP are relevant to the study area. For the purpose of this report, they are grouped into four broad categories: (a) **water-related**, including shellfish beds, prime fishing areas and finfish migratory pathways; (b) **water's edge-related**, including navigation channels and marina moorings; (c) **coast protection-related**, including intertidal flats, filled water's edge, natural water's edge, erosion hazard areas, wetlands and wetland buffers, (d) **wildlife-related**, including critical wildlife, threatened wildlife or vegetation, and public open space.

These policies are discussed generally as they apply to the Lower Maurice Riverfront, not with site-specific references. Because some of the special areas comprise such large areas, they are described in the text of the report rather than represented on the Land Use Map. For example, since the entire study area lies in a floodplain, it was not labelled as such on the Map. Proposed development which impacts any of these "special areas" of concern must be further investigated according to specific location, design and ecological constraints.

#### 4.1 Water-Related

- (1) Shellfish Beds - Despite the oyster "drought" of recent years, there is good reason to believe that the oyster industry can be revived this year. This past Spring, 31 oyster boats seeded the Delaware Bay for harvesting later in the Fall. The State owns some 15,000 oyster seed beds around the bay which it leases to individual oystermen. Large tracts of planting grounds lie just south of the Maurice River Cove. **POLICY:** Any development along the Lower Maurice river which would result in the destruction or contamination of presently productive shellfish beds is prohibited. This includes action which would alter the quality, salinity or natural circulation of the waters and dredging within or adjacent to shellfish beds which might change the level of turbidity or sedimentation. Maintenance dredging would not be prohibited if accompanied by a State-approved shellfish recovery program.

- (2) Prime Fishing Area - Recreational and commercial fin- and shellfishing are permitted in the study area only as regulated by DEP's Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife with respect to location, size, quantity of catch, etc.

**POLICY:** Activities such as sandmining in the immediate area which could alter the existing bathymetry are precluded. Industrial waste disposal, such as the bi-product of seafood processing must meet applicable State and Federal effluent limits and water quality standards.

- (3) Finfish Migratory Pathways - This refers to any waterway which serves as a passage for seasonal migration of such fish as striped bass, flounders, kingfish, and eel, all of which are found in the waters of the Maurice River.

**POLICY:** Development of any physical barrier to prevent the movement of fish along migratory pathways is prohibited unless mitigating measures such as fish ladders, erosion control, oxygenation, etc., are provided. Also prohibited is development that might change the quality, temperature, turbidity or salinity of the water.

#### 4.2 Water's Edge-Related

- (4) Navigation Channels - Past the Maurice River Cove, Delaware Bay is a navigation channel, whose waters can be as low as five feet in depth in certain areas. The channel is subject to regulation by the N.J. DEP and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It provides access for commercial and

recreational surface transportation connecting New Jersey with ports in Philadelphia and along the East coast.

**POLICY:** New or maintenance dredging of an existing channel is conditionally acceptable if prescribed conditions regarding water quality, depth authorization, needs assessment, spoils disposal and mitigating techniques are demonstrated.

- (5) Marina Moorings - These refer to areas of water which provide docking space for recreational boats, or for boat maneuvering and which provide access to land or navigational channels. They are found along the water's edge throughout the River and Bay area. **POLICY:** Maintenance dredging is usually required in this "special area" and is permitted as long as turbidity is controlled and dredge spoils are properly disposed. Only water-dependent development is permitted in marina moorings, referring to uses that can function only with direct access to the water.

#### 4.3 Coast Protection-Related

- (6) Intertidal Flats - The land adjacent to the River and along the Cove which is either permanently or daily submerged from the mean high water line to four feet below mean low water is considered tidal flats. **POLICY:** Developing, filling, new dredging or other disturbances are generally discouraged in these environmentally sensitive zones, except when it can be proven that there are no alternatives for

locating water-dependent uses or submerged infrastructure.

- (7) Filled Water's Edge - Much of the commercial/industrial activity along the Shellpile-Bivalve waterfront is situated on what is considered filled water's edge. This refers to the upland between the Riverbank and the closest linear development -- roads, in this case. Much of the area has been filled with shells, discarded and stockpiled during the thriving oyster-shucking years of the past. **POLICY:** The waterfront within 100 feet of the River in this area must be reserved for water-dependent activity. DEP permits greater flexibility on large filled water's edge sites of 10 or more acres, making possible a mix of land use activities not merely those which are water dependent. If the entire two-mile stretch of Shellpile-Bivalve waterfront is considered as one extensive development area, it could provide opportunities for diversified water-related development and re-use. Public access is encouraged on filled water's edge sites. Since much of the water's edge in the study area has already been filled and is, therefore, considered disturbed, it would seem to be appropriate to encourage in-fill and intensified development here while leaving other undisturbed territory undisturbed.

(8) Natural Water's Edge (Floodplains) - The entire study area as delineated on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) lies in the 100-year floodplain. **POLICY:** Development is prohibited in the flood hazard area within 100 feet of the River's Edge, except for water dependent uses. Development elsewhere in the floodplain should be at least one foot above the elevation of the site, therefore at 10 feet above sea level in Shellpile-Bivalve.

(9) Erosion Hazard Areas - The entire Delaware Bay Shore is a high risk erosion area, as identified by the Rutgers Center for Coastal and Environmental Studies. A 1989 study by the Cumberland County Planning Department confirmed that silting, destabilization and erosion are wearing away the banks of the Lower Maurice River and especially at the mouth of the River. It is unclear whether the cause is lack of maintenance or natural ecological change. **POLICY:** Development is generally prohibited in erosion hazard areas unless adequate shore protection measures are exercised. These may entail structural coastal engineering methods such as retaining walls or bulkheads among others, or non-structural solutions -- the preferred method. Non-structural techniques include reinforcement through sand fences, nourishment, strategic dredge spoil placement and vegetative restoration, among others.



(10) Wetlands - Under the Wetlands Act of 1970 and the Coastal Area Facilities Review Act (CAFRA), the State has jurisdiction over two-thirds of Commercial Township's land area. Only the two outermost sections of the study area -- the northern bend along the Shellpile Waterfront and the southern bend at the mouth of the River, plus a narrow strip of approximately 150 feet near Memorial Avenue are designated as tidal marsh. Further inland areas adjacent to the commercial-industrial waterfront are designated wetlands, as indicated on the accompanying Land Use Map. Technically, the U.S. Department of the Interior has classified the soils in these areas as "estuarine intertidal emergent." A 1977 wetlands inventory prepared by the Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service classified almost the entire Shellpile-Bivalve area as upland, therefore making it generally suitable for in-fill development. However, one caveat of the aerial photography upon which wetlands designation is based, is that some parcels may contain unclassified wetland areas either by omission or by man-made changes. Further site-specific determinations are, therefore, necessary. **POLICY:** In general, development is unacceptable in wetlands, except for activities (i) which require water access or cause minimal disturbance of tidal circulation and natural vegetation, and (ii) for which appropriate mitigation measures are provided.

- (11) Wetland Buffers - Land within 300 feet of wetlands and within the wetlands drainage area needs to be preserved as a buffer zone. Depending on site constraints and geographic setting, the specifics of a buffer are determined case by case. Much of the transitional zone surrounding the study area consists of native vegetation in the form of cord grass (Spartina) and reeds (Phragmites). **POLICY:** Development is prohibited in the buffer area unless the proposed development or activity is demonstrated to have no significant adverse impact. Through such mitigative efforts as the preservation of native vegetation or the construction of detention basins and berms to control runoff in one part of the buffer area, development could be permitted in other parts of the buffer.

#### 4.4 Wildlife-Related

- (12) Critical or Threatened Wildlife and Vegetation Habitats - The Maurice River provides a rich habitat for a variety of wildlife resources, including such endangered species as black ducks, bald eagles, osprey, tiger salamanders and other species of reptiles and amphibians. However, the "disturbed" nature of the developed commercial-industrial waterfront along the lower sections of the Maurice River makes their siting here less common than up-river. **POLICY:** Development is not permitted in any area inhabited by endangered species of fauna or flora or in the immediately surrounding areas necessary for their survival.

Consultation with the Delaware Estuary Program and with the Cumberland and Bayshore Rare Threatened and Endangered Species Program would be helpful for site-specific advice.

- (13) Public Open Space - The only significant public open space within the Shellpile-Bivalve vicinity is the approximately one square mile State Fish and Game Preserve toward the mouth of the River. Access by land is currently difficult because of extensive tidal marsh in the area. Additional State wildlife preserves abound outside the study area in the rest of the Township and directly across the Maurice River in Heislerville. **POLICY:** Development that would adversely impact on existing public open space is discouraged. Recreational development such as campgrounds and access roads are conditionally acceptable if compatible with State Coastal Resource policies. Development of additional open space through acquisition or expansion is encouraged.

#### 4.5 Other Special Areas

The potential impact of development on several other special areas was considered. However, none of these was deemed significant in the study area. For example, the Wild and Scenic River Corridor ends just above Shellpile, where the study area begins. The Pinelands Protection Area, located partially along the Maurice River, lies on the east bank and is, therefore, outside the subject area for this report. Since there are no

Farmland Conservation Areas in Cumberland County, this also was not of concern here. With regards to Historic and Archaeological Resources, the area is rich in cultural heritage associated with the once thriving oyster industry. Some scattered artifacts are maintained by the Rutgers Shellfish Research Lab and at the Marine Police barracks, at the Shellpile Restaurant and Raw Bar. Several shipwrecks can be found along the River, but they are hardly a historic attraction in their current condition. One historic schooner is in the process of being restored up the River, but its ultimate location remains undecided. Not a single site in the study area is recorded on the County or State Register of historic structures and places.

##### 5. NEXT STEPS

This report is intended to be the first phase of a broader effort to revitalize the waterfront and to be used as a working paper toward realizing some of the development opportunities. As such, the following areas are recommended for further study and discussion:

- (1) a highest and best use market analysis for specific waterfront properties to identify new and more productive uses of the existing waterfront;
- (2) the preservation and/or acquisition of additional open space for recreation through the Federal Green Acres Program;

- (3) the availability of private foundation grants for cultural and tourism development projects e.g., the watermen's museum;
- (4) the availability of funding for the physical rehabilitation of industrial waterfront properties from such sources as Small Cities Economic Development Discretionary Funds, the South Jersey Economic Development District and the Cumberland County Economic Development Division's Revolving Loan Program. The Township could assist individual businesses seeking to expand or relocate in identifying additional funding sources;
- (5) the involvement and support of the Delaware River and Bay Authority for overall planning assistance and development projects;
- (6) the feasibility of dredging the channel and performing the appropriate environmental review as required by the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;
- (7) the promotion of tourism with possible funding by the State's Division of Travel and Tourism under the Department of Commerce. An assessment is needed to determine the appropriate level and range of tourism activities desirable, e.g. low impact activities like house and walking tours or a museum, but not an amusement park. Preparation and distribution of a brochure should be considered;

(8) pursuit of funding possibilities for hatcheries and aquaculture projects with the N.J. DEP's Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife and U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service;

(9) the feasibility of and potential funding sources for building a water treatment facility in the Shellpile-Bivalve area;

(10) the potential for rezoning the waterfront district to incorporate all of the mixed uses currently found there. Such a mix could accommodate a marina in the industrial-general zone or a seafood processing operation in the commercial-recreation area and unify the entire district;

(11) the creation of an environmental enterprise zone to streamline permitting and to codify the requirements for development by all relevant agencies and levels of government. State legislators could be enlisted to sponsor and support an official environmental enterprise zone designation. As an alternative to such official legislative designation, the Township could pursue a less formal approach by obtaining commitments from key agencies to help expedite the development process;

(12) the preparation of a conceptual physical plan and/or schematic design for the waterfront. This would offer design guidelines and facade treatments to improve the visual image of the current landscape.

This report is an assessment of the Shellpile-Bivalve waterfront -- what is and what could be. Implementing the steps noted above would constitute the next or second phase. If there is consensus that the Lower Maurice River waterfront should be revitalized through a comprehensive effort, and that any or all of the above directions ought to be pursued, the Township must decide who does what. The necessary resources are available from a variety of public and private sources to begin the process of change.

As Commercial Township begins to address the twelve areas outlined here, the Shellpile-Bivalve waterfront can begin to turn around. Attracting development and rebuilding the waterfront will not occur immediately. However, its full potential as a thriving commercial fishing center, an attractive tourism-recreation site and a productive source of jobs and revenue can be realized over the next decade.

